

sunnyvale reNews

sunnyvale's environmental news source

Summer 2014



Conquering Food Waste — Solutions with Benefits

upcoming events

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Compost Workshops

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Hazardous Waste Drop-off

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Paper Shredding

September 13
Citywide Garage Sale Day

stay connected

on the Web
Recycling.inSunnyvale.com



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[@SunnyvaleRecycl](https://twitter.com/SunnyvaleRecycl)



Green.inSunnyvale.com



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City of Sunnyvale Environmental
Services Department



Who hasn't heard the admonition, "Finish eating your food — there are starving children in the world?" Making the connection between the dinner table and world hunger was hardly conducive to getting children to eat their food instead of wasting it, but reducing food waste does have environmental, economic and social benefits.

As a society, we literally waste tons of food. According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), more than 40 percent of the food produced in America is wasted — enough food to fill the Rose Bowl Stadium every day. The average family of four wastes 25 percent of their food purchases, or about \$1,600 per year. Nearly two thirds of food waste is due to spoilage, the other third is from preparing too much and not eating leftovers.

When food is thrown in the garbage, resources such as land, water, energy and manpower, which are used to produce, process, package, and transport food to the table, are also wasted. Once in the landfill, food anaerobically decomposes and produces methane, a potent greenhouse gas that contributes to climate change. Landfills are a major source of human-related methane production in the U.S., and account for more than 20 percent of all methane emissions. Instead of feeding landfills, consider the following food waste recovery options.

Feed the Hungry

One in six people, about 50 million Americans, experience hunger everyday. Thanks to the Good Samaritan Act that minimizes liability for donating food, you can donate excess food to community food banks, homeless shelters or food rescue operations. Individuals wishing to donate surplus

food may contact Our Daily Bread at (408) 736-4108 to arrange a drop-off time. Businesses wishing to donate surplus food may contact PeninsulaFoodRunners.org to request free pickup of surplus food. If you have overloaded fruit trees, contact VillageHarvest.org, or call (888) FRUIT-411, and they will pick up or even harvest your fruit for donations.

To learn how you can help end hunger, visit Recycling.inSunnyvale.com, and select *Food Donations* under the *Quick Links* section.

Feed Your Family More Efficiently

The EPA, in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, recently developed the *Food: Too Good to Waste Program* that offers practical solutions to reduce and prevent household food waste, and tools to help you shop, store and cook smarter so that you get the most from your food purchases (see *Tips* article, page 13).

Feed Your Compost Bin

Even if we reduce food waste, there will always be food scraps from food preparation and occasional spoiled leftovers. Instead of tossing them in the garbage, turn them into compost. The City offers composting workshops for backyard and worm composting. Visit ReduceWaste.org/Classes to sign up for a composting workshop.

Take time to assess how you manage food and consider some of the ideas provided in this *reNews* edition to minimize food waste and keep more money in your wallet. You will be helping more than yourself if you do!



living the green life

Smart Food Waste Prevention Tips

Get Smart — Take a Bite Out of Food Waste!

Reducing food waste isn't a new concept; in fact, conserving resources and preventing food waste was a vital concern prior to WWI as evidenced in the poster at right.

Current research finds that nearly everyone wastes more food than they think they do. The first step in reducing food waste, and creating lasting awareness, is to actually measure the amount of food you're throwing away. The EPA's *Food: Too Good to Waste Program* offers a measurement tool that can help you calculate how much food you waste. The helpful tips shown on the poster still hold true today. Consider adopting some of these strategies to reduce and prevent food waste in your household.



a grocery list to incorporate these foods. Like apps? There are apps to help you create meals and lists (see *Apps* at right).

Sales are great, but avoid shopping gimmicks that offer more items than you need even at reduced prices. Buy fresh ingredients in smaller quantities more often for less waste. Avoid shopping on an empty stomach to reduce impulse buying!

Prep Now — Eat Later

Preparing perishable foods soon after shopping makes it easier to whip up meals later, saving time, effort and money. Wash, dry, chop, slice and place fresh food items in clear storage containers for easy snacking and cooking. Freeze foods such as bread, sliced fruit and meats

that you won't eat right away. Batch cooking and freezing meals makes feeding your family easy without sacrificing nutrition or creating waste.

Smart Food Storage

Food spoilage, mostly fruits and veggies, accounts for two thirds of wasted food. Learning to properly store fruits and veggies will reduce, if not prevent, food waste. Go to MakeDirtNotWaste.org for food storage tips and ideas.

Shop Smart — Buy Only What You Need

While most people shop with a grocery list, few shop with meals in mind. Shop smart and make a shopping list based on how many meals you will eat between shopping trips, and plan at least one night for leftovers. Avoid buying things you already have. Check the fridge and cupboards first, identify which items should be eaten soonest, then plan meals and make

Sell By, Use By and Best Before — What Food Date Labels Really Mean

Many people throw out foods that are a day or so past the expiration dates printed on food labels. In California, infant formula and dairy products are the only foods requiring food product dates. Even though most products have dates on them, determined by manufacturers, they primarily refer to when food is at its peak quality, not whether it is unsafe to eat. Misinterpreting labels is a key factor contributing to food waste from refrigerators and pantries, and our grocery stores and farms.

A "Sell By" date tells the store how long to display the product and by when it needs to be purchased. The "Best Before" date is recommended for best flavor or quality; it is not a purchase deadline. The "Use By" date is the last date recommended for product use at peak quality per the manufacturer. For instance, yogurt is okay to eat at least a week beyond the date on the container. Even opened deli meat is good for another five to six days beyond its date as long as it's properly stored.

Fortunately, EatByDate.com has a searchable database of foods and their shelf life to steer consumers through the date-labeling maze. Smart shoppers can save money on items marked down for quick sale at the end of their dates, knowing the food will still be fine to eat.



Apps and Web Tools for Busy Foodies

Savvy food shoppers and creative cooks may find helpful web tools and apps that make meal planning and creating shopping lists a snap. Here are a few apps and web tools to download that can help reduce food waste and save you money.

Cozi.com/meal-planner — A complete family organizer for meals, recipes and shopping lists.

FoodontheTable.com — A meal planning, recipe and budget-based interactive service that coordinates shopping with grocery store sales.

FoodPlannerApp.com — Import recipes from the web, sync meal plans and shopping on all mobile devices, and track and manage your pantry with barcode scanning.

GroceryIQ.com — Organize grocery lists and download coupons.

TotalRecipeSearch.com — Download thousands of recipes for meal planning.

222MillionTons.com — A blog spot for finding and posting your own favorite recipes.

The Urban Mess Kit — A Food Packaging Waste Antidote

Disposable food packaging — food wrappers, containers, plastic forks, spoons and straws — is a major source of litter in the Bay area. For ages, people packed and carried their own food containers and utensils, and produced no litter. Since many of us eat on-the-go these days, the sensible antidote to packaging waste is the "urban mess kit."

Find a bag or pouch that fits a fork, spoon, cup and lidded container to carry dining-out leftovers. If a complete mess kit is too daunting, try carrying a compact fork and spoon for spontaneous on-the-go munching. If you don't have spare cutlery at home, search camping supply or secondhand stores.



The no-waste, no-packaging urban mess kit.



reNewing Community

Coastal Clean-up Day Turns 30!

On September 20, 2014, join your neighbors and take action to clean up local waterways and protect our Bay and the ocean. Sunnyvale’s 30th Annual Coastal Clean-up Day will focus on the West Channel and a portion of the Guadalupe Slough which flows into our south San Francisco Bay.

Registration begins at 8:30 a.m. and clean-up activities will take place from 9 a.m. until noon. Gloves, pick-up sticks, safety vests and trash bags will be provided. Volunteers are encouraged to bring their own reusable water bottles for use during the event. For more details, or to register to participate, call (408) 730-7717 or email Green@sunnyvale.ca.gov.



The 2013 litter line-up of items found in Sunnyvale’s waterways.

Sunnyvale Restaurants Comply with Foam Foodware Ban

The City ordinance banning the use of expanded polystyrene (EPS) foam foodware containers went into effect on April 22, 2014. City staff have been visiting food vendors and have found more than 86 percent are in compliance. A few vendors appreciated a friendly reminder about the ban, some were using up the last of their supplies, but most were both compliant and supportive of the ban. During a recent visit, one restaurant manager proudly greeted staff saying, “We’re way ahead of you — we got rid of that stuff awhile ago!” Audits will continue and non-compliant locations will be re-visited. Continued use of EPS will result in formal action that may include fines of up to \$500 per day. Residents can report foam foodware use at (408) 730-7262, or Recycling@sunnyvale.ca.gov. To learn more, visit NoFoam.inSunnyvale.com.



Students for Sustainability

The 2014 Earth Day Poster Contest winners were celebrated on April 29 during a City Council Special Order of the Day recognition ceremony. Mayor Jim Griffith called winners to the podium to shake hands and introduce them to the Council, audience and television viewers. The theme, “Choosing a Sustainable Future,”

inspired messages about waste reduction, reuse and recycling, water and energy conservation, and littering. Winners and their families enjoyed the poster gallery and an ice cream social in the Garden area after the ceremony. Posters can be viewed at City Hall in the hallway between the One Stop lobby and Council Chambers.

Grade 1-2	First Place	Sai Aytha	Stocklmeir Elementary
	Second Place	Uttara Krishnan	Stocklmeir Elementary
	Honorable Mention	Lauren Chu	Stocklmeir Elementary
	Meritorious	Cecilia Qian and Arnav Saharan	Stocklmeir Elementary
		Mia Corfmat, Gabriella Fourkas	Cumberland Elementary
Grade 3-4	First Place	Sophie Azriel	Cherry Chase Elementary
	First Place – Group	Thivya Prabahar, Medha Kotra, Carolyn Zhao	Stocklmeir Elementary
	Second Place	Kayura Narayanan	Stocklmeir Elementary
	Second Place – Group	Shravya Anjaria, Varsha Thennarasu	Stocklmeir Elementary
	Honorable Mention	Hila Harussi	Nimitz Elementary
		Shubhanshi Sharma, Emmy Portnoy, Manas Mantri	Stocklmeir Elementary
	Meritorious	Ryle Scott	Stocklmeir Elementary
Grade 5-6	First Place	Shanice Liu	Nimitz Elementary
	First Place – Group	Samantha Li, Yatee Samantaray	Stocklmeir Elementary
	Second Place	Christy Chi Vo	Nimitz Elementary
	Second Place – Group	Amos You, Lauryn Mar, Mikayla Silverman	Stocklmeir Elementary
	Honorable Mention	Emily Yau	Nimitz Elementary
		Sahana Singh, Ruhi Madapoosi	Stocklmeir Elementary
Grade 7-8	First Place	Emily Choi	Sunnyvale Middle School
	Second Place	Kyle Hoi	Sunnyvale Middle School
	Meritorious	Samhitha Tumkar	Cupertino Middle School

Citywide Garage Sale Day

September 13, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The City of Sunnyvale Recycling Program is hosting its 22nd Annual Citywide Garage Sale Day event on September 13. The City will advertise sellers’ registered garage sales in the Sunnyvale Sun and online at no cost. Residents who wish to have their sales advertised in the newspaper may register their garage sales at CitywideGarageSaleDay.com between July 1 and August 22. If you register after August 22, your sale listing will only appear online. Sellers may list specific items and photos, and manage their own registration to update or cancel their garage sale until August 30. Shoppers will find garage sale listings at CitywideGarageSaleDay.com on September 10. Have questions or need help registering? Contact Recycling@sunnyvale.ca.gov, or call (408) 730-7262.



upcoming events

Certiably Green Sunnyvale Businesses

In April, Mayor Jim Griffith and City Council recognized the accomplishments of six of Sunnyvale's newest and recertified Green Businesses during a Special Order of the Day ceremony.

The cumulative contributions of the City's 35 individual Green Businesses in 2013 yielded significant environmental benefits. Collectively, their greenhouse gas reductions kept 6.5 million pounds of CO₂ out of the atmosphere — equal to planting 157 acres of trees. They also saved enough energy to power 384 homes for a year, and saved the equivalent of 21 bathtubs full of fresh drinking water per hour, per day, for a year.

Welcome and congratulations to Sunnyvale's Green Businesses: For Other Living Things, NetApp, Two Lions and Vision Design. For a complete list of all Sunnyvale Green Businesses, visit Greenbusinessca.org. If you are interested in

becoming a Green Business, visit ReduceWaste.org or call (408) 282-3180 for certification information.



Left to right: Sue Sherrin (County of Santa Clara Green Business Program), Victoria Armigo (Victoria Armigo, EA), Mary Lindemuth (City of Sunnyvale Recycling Program), Superintendent Daniel Wax (City of Sunnyvale Community and Senior Centers), Sue Harrison (Vision Design), George Harrison (Two Lions) and Ann Bui (NetApp, Inc.) proudly display their awards.

City Facilities Recertify

First certified in 2007, many City facilities — the Community and Senior Centers, the Library and City Hall buildings — have achieved recertification during the past year. Staff will soon begin recertifying the SMaRT Station®, the Columbia Neighborhood Center and the Corporation Yard.

Leaving no "green" potential overlooked, staff meticulously checked off each of the 80 points on the Green Business checklist, which includes categories such as waste reduction, energy use, water conservation and pollution prevention — even down to the type of cleaners used. The City's Purchasing Department revised its cleaning supplies contracts to purchase effective, but less toxic and safer cleaning products.

During 2013, over 60 faucet aerators were swapped out for lower-flow versions — a projected savings of more than 338,000 gallons of water. The change to energy-efficient lamps and EPEAT-certified computers conserved 101,000 kilowatt hours of electricity. The Sunnyvale Theater installed energy-efficient LED lighting for an estimated savings of \$16,780 per year. Together, City Hall and Library staff recycled more than one million pounds of paper and food and beverage containers — proving Green Business certification is good for the environment and the budget.

Thermometer Exchange and MedDrop Event

Wednesday, September 17
11 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.
Sunnyvale Senior Center
Sequoia Room

Thermometer Exchange

Properly dispose of that old mercury fever thermometer stored in the back of your medicine cabinet or bathroom drawer. The first 100 participants to exchange thermometers at this event will receive a free, solar digital fever thermometer in exchange (limit one (1) per household). To avoid breakage and contamination, mercury fever thermometers



MUST be contained in an unbreakable, closed container — a plastic toothbrush holder, a soda or water bottle with a screw-on cap — or the original case. As an added measure of protection, the closed container must be placed inside a plastic zip-locked bag. Other mercury-containing products will not be accepted at this event.

MedDrop

Residents may drop off unwanted or expired prescriptions, over-the-counter medications, ointments, and liquids and creams for proper disposal. Pill containers are not accepted. Place pills in a sealed zip-locked bag and remove all personal information from ointments, liquids and creams. This program does not collect sharps, medical equipment or personal hygiene items.

For more information about this event, call (408) 730-7717, TDD (408) 730-7501, or email Green@sunnyvale.ca.gov.

Event sponsored by Sunnyvale's Environmental Services Department, Department of Public Safety and the Senior Center.

Environmental Services Department offers events geared toward sustaining a greener, healthier environment. See *Contact Us* for services and event details. Visit RecyclingEvents.inSunnyvale.com to download a Recycling Events Calendar.

Compost Workshops

July 12 • August 9 • September 13
10 a.m. to noon

To register for a workshop, call (408) 918-4640, or register at ReduceWaste.org/Classes. Registration required.

Las Palmas Park building
850 Russet Drive, Sunnyvale

Extra Dumping Weekends

October 4-5 and 11-12
8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

SMaRT Station, 301 Carl Road

Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Drop-Off Events

July 19 • August 16 • September 20
8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

No-cost HHW disposal. Call (408) 299-7300, or visit HHW.org for hazardous waste information.
164 Carl Road

Paper Shredding Events

August 23 • November 1
8 a.m. to noon

SMaRT Station, 301 Carl Road

Community Clean-up, MedDrop Events

Coastal Clean Up
September 20, 8:30 to noon

Thermometer Exchange, MedDrop
September 17, 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

(408) 730-7717, Green@sunnyvale.ca.gov

contact us

City Business Hours

Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
City TDD (408) 730-7501

Recycling Program Customer Service

(408) 730-7262

Recycling.inSunnyvale.com

Recycling@sunnyvale.ca.gov

■ Recycling answers and event details

Utilities Customer Service

(408) 730-7400

Utilities.inSunnyvale.com

- Garbage service accounts
- Cart orders, repairs, replacements
- On-Call Collection appointments
- Debris box rentals

Specialty Solid Waste & Recycling

(408) 565-9900, SSWR.com

- Missed pickups
- Collection service issues

SMaRT Station

301 Carl Road, Sunnyvale
(408) 752-8530

Open daily 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Closed Thanksgiving Day, December 25, January 1

- Garbage disposal fees
- Compost availability

Water Pollution Control Plant

1444 Borregas Ave., (408) 730-7738
WPCP.inSunnyvale.com

- Plant Tours
- Environmental Outreach